

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06

PRS-01 SP-02 FEA-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 CIEP-01 /057 W

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R 160647Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1560

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB KS IR

SUBJ: ALLEGED STRIKE OF KOREAN TRUCK DRIVERS IN IRAN

REF: SEOUL 3372

1. REF INCIDENT, WHICH KOREAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE RELUCTANT TO CHARACTERIZE AS STRIKE, OCCURED IN LATE APRIL, SHORTLY AFTER 200 KOREAN DRIVERS ARRIVED IN IRAN AND FOUND THE SALARY PAID TO THEM BY PARS CONTAINER COMPANY (EMPLOYING FIRM) INADEQUATE TO MEET LIVING COSTS. INCIDENT, ACCORDING KOREAN EMBOFFS, LASTED ONLY FEW HOURS AND DRIVERS WERE BACK ON JOB AFTER EMPLOYER AGREED TO NEGOTIATE THEIR COMPLAINTS WITH KOREAN LABOR ATTACHE HERE, KUN HO BAE. IRANIAN MINISTRY OF LABOR WAS INFORMED OF SITUATION BUT DID NOT SEND MEDIATOR TO SCENE.

2. BASIC WAGES, WHICH WERE FIXED BY AGREEMENT SIGNED PRIOR TO DRIVERS' ARRIVAL, ARE NOT CURRENTLY BARGAINING ISSUE; ALTHOUGH DRIVERS CLAIM THEY WERE NOT ADEQUATELY INFORMED OF COST OF LIVING IN IRAN IN THEIR PRE-TRIP ORIENTATION. HOUSING IS TO BE PROVIDED BY PARS FREE OF CHARGE, ALTHOUGH APARTMENTS NOT YET READY AND DRIVERS ARE TEMPORARILY BILLETED IN SARDINE-LIKE ACCOMODATIONS IN

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A MOTEL OUTSIDE TEHRAN. NOW BEING NEGOTIATED WITH PARS IS FOOD

ALLOWANCE, ITEM NOT COVERED IN ORIGINL CONTRACT, BUT WHICH DRIVERS FEEL IS NECESSARY SINCE MEALS TAKEN ON ROAD ARE FAR MOR EXPENSIVE THAN KOREAN EQUIVALENT. PARS COMPANY MANAGEMENT APPEARS TO BE HOLDING OUT AND HAS REQUESTED DETAILED JUSTIFICATION FOR PAYMENT OF NON-SPECIFIED FRINGE FOOD BENEFITS.

3. APRIL 24 ISSUE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEHRAN JOURNAL CARRIED ARTICLE TITLED "SLUM CONDITIONS AT CAMPSITE AS GUEST LABOR ARRIVES" WITH PICTURES OF WALL-TO-WALL COTS OF KOREAN DRIVERS LINED UP ON MUDDY FLOOR AND DESCRIBING SANITATION PROBLEMS IN SOME DETAIL. KOREAN OFFICIAL S TRIED TO HEAD OFF ARTICLE AND AFTER PUBLICATION SENT PROTEST LETTER TO ETELAAT NEWSPAPER GROUP (OF WHICH TEHRAN JOURNAL PART) FARHAD MASSOUDI POINTING OUT ARTICLE NOT IN BEST INTERESTS OF EITHER COUNTRY. KOREAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS TAKE VIEW THAT PARS COMPANY WAS NOT EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO ADEQUATELY PLAN FOR ACCOMODATING SOMANY FOREIGN WORKERS AT ONCE AND OBVIOUSLY FEEL PUBLICITY WILL NOT HELP MATTERS.

4. PROBLEM FACED BY KOREAN DRIVERS, WHICHEVER WAY RESOLVED IN FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH COMPANY, WILL PROBABLY BE REPEATED AS OTHER GROUPS OF GUEST WORKERS ARRIVE AND FIND LACK OF PREPARATION, LANGUAGE BARRIERS, AND STEEP LIVING COSTS HERE. REACTION OF IRANIAN PUBLIC MAY BE TYPIFIED BY IRANIAN RESIDENT OF SAME CAMP-MOTEL OCCUPIED BY KOREANS WHO TOLD TEHRAN JOURNAL REPORTER "THESE ARE ANIMAL CONDCTIONS...MY WIFE AND I ARE PAYING 130 RIALS (C. \$2) A NIGHT TO PARK HERE AND WE ARE GETTING NO FACILITIES. IT'S A DISGRACE TO IRAN."
MIKLOS

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